1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

101 a Bantu-speaking group numbering about one and one third million, whose home is the Benguela Highland of Angola (Portuguese West Africa). Christian missions have worked among them since 1881, the date of founding of the W.C.A.M. of the A.B.C.F.M., with which work the writer has been connected since 1924.

121 114 *Umbundu mentality.* It is not the purpose of this study to appraise Bantu or Umbundu mentality. Every new description of a Bantu culture gives a new angle or vantage point from which to view the versatile mentality of that interesting group of people. All available objective views unite to show us, as Driberg holds for primitive man in general, 'a being as human as ourselves, affected by the same emotions . . . with thoughts, responses, and actions differing in no essential way from our own'[1]—neither the noble savage of Rousseau nor the subhuman creature of more recent doctrinaires. 'The grouping of savages with children and idiots is but another symptom of an attitude which, when faced with a different type of culture, insists on assuming a lower type of mentality to account for that culture.'[1]

It must be owned that different views of primitive mentality are held, but it would seem that those which hold primitive man to be incapable of reasoning logically, his mentality in some way inferior or 'pre-logical', base their conclusions too largely on theoretical or library material and too little on results of actual field work.[2] It is not the purpose of the present study to examine these theories, but a word of protest must be raised against some who, basing their view of the mentality of Bantu peoples on some such theories as those mentioned above, and with or without sup-

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Savage as He Really Is*, pp. 2, 3 (London: Routledge, 1929).

[2] Cf., for example, L. Levy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures*, *La Mentalité Primitive*, &c. The seriousness with which these and similar theoretical studies have been taken is surprising. Cf. e.g., R. Allier, *Mind of the Savage* (London: Bell, 1929); J. W. C. Dougall, *Characteristics of African Thought* (London: International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1932); N. S. Booth, *Teaching a Bantu Community* (MS. copy). Dr. Max Gluckman of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute told me that I had wrongly interpreted Levy-Bruhl, and he kindly loaned me a copy of a paper by Evans-Pritchard which sets forth a different interpretation of Levy-Bruhl's thesis with regard to the 'pre-logical' mentality. It is not my intention here to combat the thesis of the 'pre-logical' mentality, but rather a common interpretation of it (Evans-Pritchard, 'Levy-Bruhl's Theory of Primitive Mentality', *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University*, vol. i, pt. ii).

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

ones. This situation was reported by Magyar, when he wrote, 'Quibanda (should be Civanda) to the east has 500 villages. The Chief has great power. He sends tribute every year to the king of Bailundu but is himself fully independent.'[1] Magyar described about 15 *atumbu* or '*ovikandscho*',[2] as he called them, of Bailundu. He estimated the population of Bailundu at 450,000, and for all the kingdoms of the Ovimbundu 1,200,000,[3] figures which are probably not very different from present-day facts. The report and description of the 'Capitania de Benguella' in 1799 said that the king of Bailundu dominated 2,056 villages; the king of Viye, 886; and the king of Ngalangi, 900; and listed their 'feudos' respectively as 82, 54, and 78.[4] My list of the Ngalangi *atumbu* shows 112. In Bailundu about 20 *atumbu* were ruled by members of the royal family, including heirs apparent or expectant, and the queen (*Inakulu*), who also had her own establishment.[5] About 20 were ruled by other court officials.

Most of these *atumbu* are still recognized as such or as *olombala*.[6] Their decay has not been as great as that of the *ombala*[6] of their liege lord, for they still fulfil certain functions in native life. They have also been given new functions by the administrative authorities. The minor chiefs as well as village headmen are all required to assist in assessing and collecting the native tax, and also in recruiting labour for government works and for contracts. In some areas they receive in return the remission of their own taxes. In some areas they are required to wear uniforms. On the dancing floors of most of these minor *olombala* courts are still held, justice determined, and (to a limited extent) fines 'eaten'. Such judgements are not officially recognized or allowed by the European authorities. The African, however, often finds that European courts do not meet his needs or accord with his concepts of justice.

[1] Magyar, op. cit., p. 389.

[2] Umbundu *ovikanjo* (plural), 'branches', a term which through commercial or European influence is applied to the *atumbu*.

[3] For these figures and for descriptions of the several kingdoms, see Magyar, op. cit., chap. ix.

[4] *Annaes Mar. e Col.*, 4a Ser., pp. 155 ff.

[5] Magyar, op. cit., p. 390.

[6] *Olombala*, plural of *ombala*, a capital village or chief's residence.

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an elevation of 4,000 feet or more, and the boundaries of Ovimbundu territory closely correspond with this area.(1) Ovimbundu are found also in regions adjoining the Highland, and Umbundu-speaking groups stretch as far as the Atlantic coast-line, between the towns of Loanda and Benguella. Ovimbundu country is divided between the Administrative Provinces of Bie, Benguella, and Huila, in the Districts of Benguella, Huambo, Cuanza Sul, Bie and Huila.

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NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

To the east and south-east of the Ovimbundu are the Luimbe, Luchaze, Mbunda, Mbwela, etc., for all of whom the Ovimbundu use the derogatory term *Ngangela*, or *Ganguella* in the Portuguese version.(2) The Ovimbundu attitude towards these people is illustrated in the proverb "as a grass hut is not a house, so an *ocingangela* is not a person".(3) This eastern region was a favourite hunting-ground for slave-traders from Viye and Bailundu.

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To the north-east are the Chokwe, Bangala and Songo peoples, who are related to the Lunda group.(4)

To the west and south of the Ovimbundu are cattle-keeping peoples - the Nganda, Ndombe, Hanya, Cilenge, Cipungu, Muila, Nyaneka, Mulondo and Khumbi. These form a fairly homogeneous cultural group, and are in certain respects similar to the southern Ovimbundu.(5) Childs, following Estermann,(6) uses the collective name *"Bangala"* in referring to them, but in order to avoid confusion with the Bangala tribe to the north-east, this usage is not adopted here. Still further south are the Ambo and Herero, also cattle-keepers.

The tribes to the north of the Ovimbundu - Esela, Cipala, Lupolo, Ndongo or Kimbundo etc. - belong to the western or Angola 'cluster' of the Congo people.(7) The Esele (Vesele) and Mbui (Amboim) may also belong to this group, but have not yet been surely classified.(8) The northern tribes are sometimes collectively called by the Ovimbundu *Olongoya*, a term which implies that they speak a language unintelligible to the Ovimbundu, but which has not the derogatory sense of *"Ngangela"*.(9) Unlike the eastern peoples, the peoples to the south and north of the Ovimbundu are recognised as *omunu* (people), or even *vakuetu* (comrades).(10)

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DEMOGRAPHY

The 1940 Angola Census(11) estimates the number of Ovimbundu (Mbundo) as 1,331,087, of whom 694,504 are females, 636,583 males. Childs(12) points out that this number should be decreased by at least 150,000 owing to the erroneous inclusion of several small non-Ovimbundu tribal groups.

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(1) See map. (2) See McCulloch, 1951, p.52.
(3) The term used for "person" in the proverb is *omunu*, a "potential" person - a word used for adolescents. See pp. below.
(4) The Bangala are sometimes held to be related to the Congo rather than the Lunda group.
(5) See below, p. (6) 1935, pp.45-69.
(7) Childs, 1949, p.8. (8) Ibid.
(9) Ibid., p.189. (10) Ibid. p.x.
(11) Quoted by Mendes Correia, 1943, p.423, and Sarmento, 1948.
(12) 1949, p.9.

161 But this number is probably made up by Ovimbundu emigrants to other colonies and to the Union of South Africa.(1)

162 There are no recent estimates of the populations of the various groups of Ovimbundu. Magyar in 1859 however gave figures which are of some interest.(2) He estimated the total Ovimbundu ("Kimbanda") population at 1,880,000, but points out that this number includes 300,000 from tribes which, though culturally resembling the Ovimbundu, are not linguistically related to them (Kissama, Mupinda, Mussumbe, Lusseke, Mamyemba and Massongo). Another 300,000 are from tribes which Magyar includes as "Kimbanda" speaking, but which are not generally reckoned as Ovimbundu today. (Nganda, Esele, Humbi, Lupolo, Hako and Kakingi.) This would leave 1,280,000, a figure remarkably near to the present estimate. The following are his figures for the separate groups:-

	Area in sq.m.	*Population*
Viye (Bie)	800	120,000
Bailundu	2,000	450,000
Wambu (Huambo)	?	120,000
Ciyaka (Kiaka)	?	75,000
Ngalangi (Galangue)	1,000	250,000
Civula (Kibala)	200	35,000
Ndulo (Andulo)	160	40,000
Sambu (Sambos)	120	30,000
Kakonda (Cacconda)	300	100,000
	Total	1,220,000

There are no recent estimates of tribal density. The 1940 Census(3) gives density in the Provinces as :-

Bie Province(4)	1.5 per sq. km.
Benguella	8.5 per sq. km.
Huila	2.0 per sq. km.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT(5)

TOPOGRAPHY

133 The homeland of the Ovimbundu corresponds closely with the highest part of the Benguella Highland, i.e. the area lying between 11° and 15° South Latitude, and meridians 14° and 18° E. Altitude in this region is everywhere over 4,000 feet, and the western ridges rise as high as 9,000 feet, forming the highest north-western portion of the ancient South African sub-continental plateau. To the east, elevation drops gradually from the Kwanza valley towards the Kasai and Zambesi rivers. To the west, descent is irregular - in places almost precipitous - to the coastal plain. This plain and the stretch of higher country (below 3,200 feet) which separates it from the Highland proper, form an arid and sparsely-populated region which is a northerly extension of the Kalahari, Namieb and Onaheke deserts.

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.9. (2) Magyar, 1859, pp.125, 239, 361 etc.
(3) Quoted by Sarmento, 1948.
(4) This figure is of little significance since Bie Province includes large sparsely-inhabited non-Ovimbundu areas in south-east Angola.
(5) Childs 1949, chap.1. Fitzgerald 1948, pp.278f. Hambly 1934, pp.108f.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13
Angola FP1

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

In modern Angola, an Overseas Province of Portugal,[1] the Ovimbundu form the most numerous of the African peoples, with their million and a half of population,[2] and have also the reputation of being industrious—especially the Ovimbundu of Bailundo.[3] Their homeland, the Benguela Highland, has also been of importance in the modern economic development of Angola.

On the narrow strip of coastal plain stand three cities[4]—Lobito, Catumbela, and Benguela. Both Benguela and Catumbela knew the rubber trade; Lobito was founded in the early part of this century as the coastal terminal of the Benguela Railway which runs through Umbundu country and beyond the Congo frontier and thence to Elisabethville. The Benguela Railway is the economic backbone of the Highland. On it are the cities of Nova Lisboa and Silva Porto and a string of smaller trading towns. Traders from the Bimbe area drove regularly down to Vila Nova, one such trading town on the line, a distance of a hundred and thirty miles or so to sell maize, and buy trade goods and African villagers knew that along the railway maize sold for better prices and clothes were much cheaper.

[1] This term was used for nearly a hundred years up to 1933 when the term Colony was adopted. In 1951 'colony' was dropped in favour of the old term.

[2] Estimate made in 1935 by Mr. Theodore Tucker then of the Missão Evangelica do Dondi.

[3] Galvão and Selvagem, op. cit., pp. 384-5.

[4] A city receives its title through official recognition. The 1950 census gives Nova Lisboa as having a higher 'civilised' population (7,582 of whom 4,756 were white) than any city except Luanda. The total population has been estimated at 60,000 (Egerton, p. 199). Estimates given me in 1935-6 suggested that Nova Lisboa has some 6,000 'civilised' persons and 20,000-30,000 natives. Lobito has fewer civilised persons but may have a larger native population of perhaps 50,000.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

CHAPTER III

CHIEFS AND HEADMEN IN GUMBA

1. *The History of Gumba*

The historical perspective of Ovimbundu is short. Few, even elders, know of any landmark earlier than the Mutu-ya-Kevela rising of 1902–3, nor even for those who had participated in it did the time of the rubber trade form a Golden Age by which the present is judged. The period about which most was remembered was the reign of Mbati.[1]

Mbati had ruled over both Gumba and Chicunda, a union which had existed only during his lifetime, and which would have given him on present-day population figures 7,500–9,000 subjects.[2] He had managed to keep in his own hands the relations between his people and the government post. Policemen arriving at his capital to recruit labourers were entertained while Mbati's ministers got together the men required. Although an upholder of the traditional rites associated with chieftancy he had been on good terms with the missionaries and allowed a Catholic catechist to settle in his village. One of his sons became a Protestant schoolteacher near the railway line, another entered the Catholic seminary but left and became a policeman in Cela. Many of the numerous progeny provided by his seventeen wives are still living in Gumba.

Mbati's downfall came through his practising the traditional annual ritual cannibalism (*oku lia ekongo*). About 1934–5 he was banished for this to another part of Umbundu country.

[text continues on p. 37]

[1] Magyar marks a place called Gumba on his map (opposite to page 1) but puts it to the south of the capital of Bailundo. As he does not seem to have personal knowledge of this area, this does not rule out identification, especially as the Cuvo begins to the south of Bailundo.

[2] For the basis of this estimate see section 2 of this chapter.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

634 with primary and possibly some secondary education, the
648 clerks who have primary schooling, and the policemen, who are often illiterate. The police are locally recruited and are provided with their keep, from the farm attached to the post, and with uniforms. They are usually—by no means always—illiterate. The interpreter, clerks, and police tend to identify themselves with the *chefe* as against the people; however, a policeman may be influenced in his relations with the villagers by gifts and friendship.

634 The size of population of sub-chiefdoms varies. The 1950
161 census gave the total 'non-civilized' population of the Bailundo *concelho* as being 246,045, and the number of sub-chiefdoms as 82,[9] that is, an average of 3,000 individuals per sub-chiefdom. The *chefe* of Bimbe told me in August 1956 that Gumba had 800 taxpayers, and Chicunda had 700. Putting the proportion of taxpayers as 1 to 6 (on the basis of Epalanga proportions) this gives 4,800 as the population figure for Gumba and 4,200 as the figure for Chicunda. Even if the proportion of 1 to 5 be taken as the proportion between taxpayers and total population this gives us 4,000 as the figure for Gumba and 3,500 as the figure for Chicunda. I do not know what the local density of population is; in the Bailundo *concelho* as a whole it is 16–17 individuals per square kilometre.[10]

634 The chief and government headmen are the main channel of
648 conveying demands and orders from the post to the villagers.
622 They receive in return the remission of their taxes. Their dependence on the post is not, however, sufficient to give them a position of marked superiority in their locality for the following reasons. They are unable to control all relations between the post and the people; anybody who has a dispute on hand may take it direct to the post. In village life their
634 influence can always be counterbalanced by that of the
622 catechists and 'elders of the school' whose contact with the
[797] missions is much closer than that of the chiefs and government headmen with the post. They also lack economic resources; the exemption from taxes (which the Catholic catechists share)

[9] See Gálvao and Selvagem, pp. 584–5. For Angolan population density see Egerton, pp. 36–37.

[10] My own estimate from figures given by Galvão and Selvagem.